

## REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated January 6, 2009. Claims 1, 3 to 10, 12 to 18 and 20 to 24 are in the application, with Claims 1, 10 and 20 being independent. Claims 1, 3 to 10, 12 to 18 and 20 have been amended, and Claims 21 to 24 have been newly added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Claim 20 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, for allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. In particular, the Office Action alleges the original disclosure does not have support for the recitation of a “computer-readable medium”. Applicants respectfully disagree, and direct attention to page 20, line 17 to page 22, line 1 of the specification. This cited portion is seen to provide support for the foregoing claimed recitation.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 6, 8 to 10, 12, 13, 17, 18 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0035968 (Higashikata). Claims 5 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higashikata in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,058,207 (Tuijin) and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,102,785 (Tamagawa). Claims 7 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Higashikata in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,172,692 (Huang). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

Independent Claim 1 as amended generally concerns a color processing method of determining a combination of color material signals of a plurality of kinds of color materials for reproducing a color represented by an input color signal. The method includes the steps of obtaining a plurality of combinations of the plurality of kinds of color

materials, each of the combinations being capable of reproducing a color represented by the input color signal, and setting a function which is smooth and nonlinear and which represents a relation between a color signal and a total use amount of the color materials, based on a signal of a representative color and a total use amount of the color materials of the representative color. The method further includes the steps of calculating the total use amount of the color materials corresponding to the input color signal by using the function, and determining the combination of color material signals corresponding to the input color signal from the plurality of combinations of the plurality of kinds of color materials, based on the input color signal and the calculated total use amount of the color materials.

Thus, among its many features, Claim 1 provides for (i) setting a function which is smooth and nonlinear and which represents a relation between a color signal and a total use amount of the color materials, based on a signal of a representative color and a total use amount of the color materials of the representative color, (ii) calculating the total use amount of the color materials corresponding to the input color signal by using the function, and (iii) determining the combination of color material signals corresponding to the input color signal from the plurality of combinations of the plurality of kinds of color materials, based on the input color signal and the calculated total use amount of the color materials.

By virtue of the foregoing features, it is possible for the total use amount of the color materials to smoothly change with respect to the variation of input signals. Thus, the occurrence of the rapid change of gradation for the total use amount of the color materials can be prevented.

The applied references of Higashikata, Tuijin, Tamagawa and Huang are not seen to disclose or suggest at least foregoing features (i) to (iii).

As understood by Applicants, Higashikata discloses a system which makes an amount of black component smooth. When making the amount of black component smooth, the total amount of color material may result in changing smoothly. For example, in Higashikata, a model represented by " $C, M, Y, K = L^*, a^*, b^*, K$ " may be realized. In addition, Higashikata is seen to describe calculating the total use amount of color material and determining whether the calculated total use amount exceeds an ejection amount limit.

Although Higashikata may be seen to disclose that an amount of black component can be smoothed, Higashikata is not seen to disclose or suggest making a total use amount of color materials smooth. Accordingly, Higashikata could not be seen to disclose or suggest (i) setting a function which is smooth and nonlinear and which represents a relation between a color signal and a total use amount of the color materials, based on a signal of a representative color and a total use amount of the color materials of the representative color, (ii) calculating the total use amount of the color materials corresponding to the input color signal by using the function, and (iii) determining the combination of color material signals corresponding to the input color signal from the plurality of combinations of the plurality of kinds of color materials, based on the input color signal and the calculated total use amount of the color materials. In addition, Higashikata is not seen to disclose or suggest the attendant benefits provided by these features.

In addition, Tuijin, Tamagawa and Huang have been reviewed and are not seen to compensate for the deficiencies of Higashikata. In particular, Tuijin, Tamagawa

and Huang are not seen to disclose or suggest foregoing features (i) to (iii), nor the attendant benefits provided by such features.

Claim 1 is therefore believed to be allowable over the applied references.

In addition, independent Claims 10 and 20 are apparatus and computer-readable medium claims, respectively, which generally correspond to method Claim 1. Accordingly, Claims 10 and 20 are believed to be allowable for the same reasons.

The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa, California office at (714) 540-8700. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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